CLAIMS:

1. A method of treating a patient having chronic hepatitis C infection that comprises administering to the patient a therapeutically weight-effective amount of ribavirin in association with a therapeutically effective amount of pegylated interferon alfa protein for a treatment time period sufficient to eradicate detectable HCV-RNA and to maintain no detectable HCV-RNA for at least twelve weeks after the end of the treatment time period.

2. The method of claim 1, wherein the therapeutically weight-effective amount of ribavirin administered is from about 800 mg to about 1400 mg per day.

3. The method of claim 2, wherein the therapeutically weight-effective amount of ribavirin administered is about 800 mg/day, about 1000 mg/day or about 1200 mg per day.

4. The method of claim 1, wherein the patient that has chronic hepatitis C is infected with multiple HCV genotypes.

5. The method of claim 1, wherein the patient that has chronic hepatitis C is infected with HCV genotype 1.

6. The method of claim 1, wherein the patient that has chronic hepatitis C is infected with HCV genotype 2 and/or 3.

7. The method of claim 1, wherein the pegylated interferon alfa that is administered is selected from the group consisting of interferon alfa-2a, interferon alfa-2b, interferon alfa-2c, interferon alfa n-1, interferon alfa n-3 and consensus interferon.

8. The method of claim 1, wherein the pegylated interferon alfa that is administered is pegylated interferon alfa-2a or pegylated interferon alfa-2b.

9. The method of claim 1, wherein the pegylated interferon alfa that is administered is a pegylated interferon alfa-2b and wherein the amount of pegylated interferon alfa-2b that is administered in the treatment time period is about 1.5 micrograms per kilogram of pegylated interferon alfa-2b protein per week on a weekly basis for at least twenty-four weeks.

10. The method of claim 9, wherein the pegylated interferon alfa-2b is administered on a weekly basis for about forty-eight weeks.

11. The method of claim 1, wherein the therapeutically weight-effective amount of ribavirin to be administered is in an amount that is at least about 10.6 mg/kg of the patient's body weight per day.

12. The method of claim 1, wherein the patient that has chronic hepatitis C is infected with HCV genotype 1, and wherein the patient has less than two million copies of hepatitis C virus per milliliter of the patient's serum.

13. The method of claim 12, wherein the therapeutically weight-effective amount of ribavirin to be administered per day is at least about 10.6 mg/kg of the patient's body weight per day.

14. The method of claim 1, wherein the patient that has chronic hepatitis C is infected with HCV genotype 1, and wherein the patient has greater than two million copies of hepatitis C virus per milliliter of the patient's serum.

15. The method of claim 14, wherein the therapeutically weight-effective amount of ribavirin to be administered per day is at least about 10.6 mg/kg of the patient's body weight per day.

16. The method of claim 1, wherein the patient that has chronic hepatitis C is infected with HCV genotype 2 and/or 3, and wherein the patient has less than two million copies of hepatitis C virus per milliliter of the patient's serum.

17. The method of claim 16, wherein the therapeutically weight-effective amount of ribavirin to be administered per day is at least about 10.6 mg/kg of the patient's body weight per day.

18. The method of claim 1, wherein the patient that has chronic hepatitis C is infected with HCV genotype 2 and/or 3, and wherein the patient has greater than two million copies of hepatitis C virus per milliliter of the patient's serum.

19. The method of claim 18, wherein the therapeutically weight-effective amount of ribavirin to be administered per day is at least about 10.6 mg/kg of the patient's body weight.

20. A method of treating a patient having chronic hepatitis C infection that comprises administering to the patient a therapeutically weight-effective amount of ribavirin of about 800 mg/day for a patient having a weight of about 60 to about 65 kg, about 1000 mg/day for a patient having a weight in the range of greater than about 65 kg to less than about 85 kg, and about 1200 mg/day for a patient having a weight greater than about 85 kg, in association with about 1.5 micrograms per kilogram of pegylated interferon alfa-2b protein once a week for a treatment time period sufficient to eradicate detectable HCV-RNA and to maintain no detectable HCV-RNA for at least twelve weeks after the end of the treatment time period.

21. The method of claim 20, wherein the patient that has chronic hepatitis C is infected with multiple HCV genotypes.

22. The method of claim 20, wherein the patient that has chronic hepatitis C is infected with HCV genotype 1.

23. The method of claim 20, wherein the patient that has chronic hepatitis C is infected with HCV genotype 2 and/or 3.

24. The method of claim 20, wherein the treatment time period is about forty weeks to fifty weeks.

25. The method of claim 20, wherein the patient that has chronic hepatitis C is infected with HCV genotype 1, and wherein the patient has less than two million copies of hepatitis C virus per milliliter of the patient's serum.

26. The method of claim 20, wherein the patient that has chronic hepatitis C is infected with HCV genotype 1, and wherein the patient has greater than two million copies of hepatitis C virus per milliliter of the patient's serum.

27. The method of claim 20, wherein the patient that has chronic hepatitis C is infected with HCV genotype 2 and/or 3, and wherein the patient has less than two million copies of hepatitis C virus per milliliter of the patient's serum.

28. The method of claim 20, wherein the patient that has chronic hepatitis C is infected with HCV genotype 2 and/or 3, and wherein the patient has greater than two million copies of hepatitis C virus per milliliter of the patient's serum.

29. A method of treating a patient having chronic hepatitis C infection that comprises administering to the patient at least about 10.6 mg/kg of the patient's body weight of ribavirin per day in association with about 1.5 micrograms/kg of the patient's body weight of pegylated interferon alfa-2b protein once a week for a treatment time period sufficient to eradicate detectable HCV-RNA and to maintain no detectable HCV-RNA for at least twelve weeks after the end of the treatment time period.

30. The method of claim 29, wherein the patient that has chronic hepatitis C is infected with multiple HCV genotypes.

31. The method of claim 29, wherein the patient that has chronic hepatitis C is infected with HCV genotype 1.

32. The method of claim 29, wherein the patient that has chronic hepatitis C is infected with HCV genotype 2 and/or 3.

33. The method of claim 29, wherein the treatment time period is at least about twenty-four weeks long.

34. The method of claim 29, wherein the treatment time period is about forty-eight weeks long.

35. The method of claim 29, wherein the patient that has chronic hepatitis C is infected with HCV genotype 1, and wherein the patient has less than two million copies of hepatitis C virus per milliliter of the patient's serum.

36. The method of claim 35 wherein the treratment time period is about forty-eight weeks.

37. The method of claim 29, wherein the patient that has chronic hepatitis C is infected with HCV genotype 1, and wherein the patient has greater than two million copies of hepatitis C virus per milliliter of the patient's serum.

38. The method of claim 37, wherein the treatment time period is about forty-eight weeks.

39. The method of claim 29, wherein the patient that has chronic hepatitis C is infected with HCV genotype 2 and/or 3, and wherein the patient has less than two million copies of hepatitis C virus per milliliter of the patient's serum.

40. The method of claim 39, wherein the treatment time period is about forty-eight weeks.

41. The method of claim 29, wherein the patient that has chronic hepatitis C is infected with HCV genotype 2 and/or 3, and wherein the patient has greater than two million copies of hepatitis C virus per milliliter of the patient's serum.

42. The method of claim 41, wherein the treatment time period is about forty-eight weeks.